

Voluntary - Public

**Clearance Office:** All - FAS

**Date:** 4/30/2009

**GAIN Report Number:** BK9005

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Post:** Sarajevo

### Bosnia and Herzegovina Starts Vaccination of Sheep against Brucellosis

**Report Categories:**

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

**Approved By:**

**Prepared By:**

Sanela Stanojcic-Eminagic

**Report Highlights:**

**Report Highlights:**

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) will start vaccinating sheep against brucellosis in May 2009 with a financial support from the Embassy of Sweden of nearly \$3.5 million. In the last several years, outbreaks of disease in animals and in humans have caused growing concerns and BiH reported approximately 1,000 human cases of brucellosis and euthanized approximately 32,000 animals (mostly sheep) in 2008. The "test and slaughter" policy that has been applied previously for brucellosis control appears to be unsatisfactory and veterinarians decided to conduct vaccination as a more efficient strategy for the disease control. Brucellosis control is hampered by BiH complex veterinary service and poor cooperation between veterinary health and human health sectors, and the lack of finances.

**Executive Summary:**

**Summary**

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) will start vaccination of sheep against brucellosis in the beginning of May 2009. The State Veterinary Office has announced this based on the decision of the Working Group for Brucellosis and the Operation Plan for Brucellosis Control they have prepared. The Working Group has made this decision after conducting comprehensive research of the disease prevalence and its effect on human and animal health and after many meetings and debates. In addition, they explored results achieved in other countries that apply vaccination against brucellosis.

Apparently, the previously conducted “test and slaughter” policy hasn’t provided good results and therefore BiH decided to do change the approach to diseases control. The vaccination should be completed by mid July and the public awareness campaign will be carried out in parallel to ensure that the project importance is presented to the public and especially to farmers . The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) will support these activities with approximately \$3.5 million (5 million Convertible Marks or KM).

## **General Information:**

### **Background**

Started in 2000, outbreaks of Brucellosis threatened the sheep population of BiH. Since then, outbreaks of brucellosis in small ruminants and in humans have caused growing concerns and resulted in significant economic losses. There were 757 reported human cases in the Federation of BiH (FBiH).<sup>[1]</sup> since the beginning of 2008, compared to 488 cases in 2007 in the same period. In the Republika Srpska (RS) there were 213 human cases since January 2008. BiH epidemiologists believe that the total number of 970 human cases must be higher because some cases are asymptomatic and therefore possibly unreported. They expect that the brucellosis situation gets worse in the coming months because of spring reproduction in sheep.

The number of euthanized animals has increased severely from 8,788 in 2007 to the approximately 32,000 animals in 2008 (mostly sheep). In 2008, the RS tested 205,000 small ruminants, found 6,120 positive and euthanized 18,360 animals. The FBiH tested 315,000 small ruminants and found 13,500 positive. The country’s total sheep and goat population is approximately 1.1 million heads.

BiH Entities have had separate strategies for brucellosis control and funds used for that purpose, and there is no national-level strategy. For example, all animals from herd are euthanized if more than 20% of animals from herd test positive in the RS, or more than 50% in the FBiH. The Entities’ also apply different indemnity policies.

The State Veterinary Office (SVO) is tasked to harmonize the Entities’ strategies and ensure regular reporting on the outbreaks. Apparently, the situation is getting worse every day, so the SVO created the Working Group for Brucellosis in order to create a common strategy for brucellosis control for the whole country.

There have been several problems that make easy for brucellosis to spread from animal to animal and from animal to human. The nomadic grazing system makes animal identification and localization very difficult. The Government oversight for farm registration, animal identification, and animal movement control is still very weak. BiH has a complex administrative setup that makes collaboration among different sectors and administrative units very difficult. Reportedly, the regulations are often not enforced and particularly for animal movement controls. The reasons include shortage of personnel, shortage of equipment, insufficient animal health control funds, lack of communication between the veterinary subunits, and lack of compliance by the producers.

The situation is further complicated by a complex human health sector structure.

BiH has thirteen ministries of health for a population of less than 4 million – one for each entity, one for the BD and one for each of the ten cantonal ministries in FBiH. These ministries of health have institutes of public health which are responsible for communicable disease health monitoring, prevention, and control activities within their epidemiology departments. The RS system is centralized, with planning, regulation and management functions being the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The recently established state-level Health Sector within the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) has a few employees and a narrow mandate that does not include communicable disease control and prevention. Generally, there are poor coordination arrangements between the state and the entity-level public and animal health institutions.

[1] Under the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, Bosnia Herzegovina (BiH) is divided into two Entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (F BiH) and Republika Srpska (RS). There is also the District of Brcko, established by a separate international agreement in 2000, which has a special administrative status.